(c) the details of steps Government propose to take to protect the red gram growers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) The wholesale prices of red gram (arhar) are presently ruling above the Minimum Support Prices at important selected centres in the country; however, the prices had fallen below the support level during November-December, 2001 at certain centres in Karnataka, but have started firming up from January onwards and are at present ruling generally above the Minimum Support Prices.

The Government has already fixed the Minimum Support Price of arhar for the 2001-02 season at Rs. 1320/- per qtl. There is no proposal to enhance the MSP already announced by the Government.

In order to protect the interests of pulses growers in the country, a centrally sponsored scheme of National Pulses Development Project (NPDP) is being implemented in 30 States/UTs in 350 districts on 75:25 sharing patterns between the Government of India and the States. The assistance is being provided to all the pulses including red gram. Under the NPDP Scheme, incentives are being provided to the farmers through State Governments on the use of certified seeds, rhizobium culture micro-nutrients, sprinkler sets, improved farm implements etc. so as to motivate them to increase the production of pulses. The NPDP Scheme is being implemented in 27 districts of Karnataka.

To save the crops from pre-harvest losses from insect pest disease, a central sector scheme entitled, "Promotion of Integrated Pest Management" is also being implemented. This Scheme is being implemented through 26 central integrated pest management centres located in 22 States including Karnataka and 1 union territory. The main mandate of these centres is pest disease monitoring, production and releases of bio-control agents, conservation of bio-control agents and human resource development by imparting training to agricultural extension officers and farmers at the grass root levels by organizing farmers field schools in the farmers fields.

Coconut Technology Mission

2085. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether sanction has since been given to the Coconut Technology Mission;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total funds required for this project and the amount already allocated; and

(d) the present status of the work of the project and by when the project would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Government of India has agreed to implement a Central Sector Scheme for Technology Mission on Coconut during 2001-2002 as part of the IX Plan, in all coconut producing States, through the Coconut Development Board. The scheme for Technology Mission on Coconut envisages to address issues relating to technology development, demonstrations and adoption in the field of the insect/pest and disease management; processing and product diversification; and market research and promotion. The aims and objectives of the scheme on Technolgy Mission on Coconut are:—

(i) to establish convergence and synergy among numerous ongoing governmental programmes in the field of coconut development in order to bring in horizontal and vertical integration of these programmes;

(ii) to ensure adequate, appropriate, timely and concurrent attention to all the links in the production, post-harvest and consumption chain;

(iii) to maximize economic, ecological and social benefits from the existing investment and infrastructure created for coconut development;

(iv) to promote economically desirable diversification and value addition to generate skilled employment; and

(v) to disseminate technologies using participatory approach through demonstration and promotion to address the gaps in the mission mode.

(c) The total funds required for implementing the scheme during last three months of the year 2001-2002 is Rs. 400.00 lakh. Accordingly Rs. 400.00 lakh has been earmarked for the purpose. It is proposed to implemented the scheme during X Plan also. For the year 2002-2003 an outlay of Rs. 2000.00 lakh has been proposed.

(d) The Project Approval Committee to sanction projects under the scheme has been constituted. The Coconut Development Board has already initiated

preliminary necessary action and released the "Operational Guidelines" to implement the scheme. Before projects are sanctioned under the scheme and funds released, approval of token supplementary in the last batch of supplementary grant is required, as the scheme attracts provision of New Service. Ministry of Finance, however, has approved the proposal in principle.

NWDPRA Scheme in A.P.

2086. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the current status of National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas Scheme in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether Government have evaluated the success of the scheme in the State; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas is currently being implemented in 150 watersheds in Andhra Pradesh.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Government have got evaluation studies conducted in respect of Narvagedda watershed, Emboy watershed, Sirpur watershed and Bukkapattanam watershed by Agro Economic Research Centre, Agricultural Finance Corporation and All India Soil and Land Use Survey Organization. The findings of the evaluation studies reveal that yield of major agricultural crops improved significantly by 25% to 200%, run off reduced by upto 25%, soil loss reduced by up to 15% and sediment discharge reduced by up to 20%. The net profit of beneficiary family by growing ground nut crop was assessed to be Rs. 4016 per hectare in Narvagedda watershed.

Availability of genetically improved cotton and rice

2087. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether genetically engineered/improved cotton and rice is likely to be made available to farmers; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?